



Wisconsin Department of
Health and Family Services

Preventing the Spread of Influenza in a School Setting How You Can Help

Influenza, or the “flu” is spread mainly from person to person when people cough or sneeze near one another. Sometimes it can be spread when a person touches nose drainage or saliva from an infected person and then touches one’s own mouth or nose before washing hands.

The best way to prevent serious illness from influenza is to get immunized. All persons over age 6 months are encouraged to get the “flu shot.” Immunization is strongly recommended for persons in the categories listed below. It is also important to follow the guidelines below to help protect yourself, your co-workers, and your family from getting the flu. For more information, visit: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza>.

Immunization All students and staff in the following categories should be immunized:	1. Students and staff with chronic medical conditions.* 2. Students up to age 18 on chronic aspirin therapy. 3. Household contacts of children less than 6 months old.	4. Students and staff who are pregnant during the influenza season. 5. Day care providers of children less than 6 months old.	6. Day care providers who are pregnant during the influenza season. 7. Staff over age 50.
Respiratory Hygiene Students, teachers, and other staff should practice good cough etiquette / respiratory hygiene:	1. Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. 2. Throw the tissue into a waste container immediately after use.	3. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after discarding tissue. As an alternative to hand washing, hands may be sanitized with alcohol gel.	Tissues, waste containers, and alcohol gel should be available in convenient locations. Students should not share drinking cups, water bottles, eating utensils, and other items placed in mouth.
Hand Hygiene Make sure sink areas have plenty of soap and paper towels available for use.	To help protect against respiratory illnesses, students and staff should wash hands: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> as a part of respiratory hygiene. before meals. after contact with persons with respiratory illnesses. whenever hands are soiled. 	Hands should be washed with warm soap and water for at least 15 seconds with rubbing action, then rinsed, and dried with a paper towel. A clean paper towel should be used to turn off water faucets.	An effective and convenient alternative to soap and water is cleaning hands with alcohol gel. Students and staff are encouraged to carry a supply for personal use.
Exclusion	Students, teachers, and other staff who develop symptoms of influenza (fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache, muscle aches) while at school should go home as soon as possible.	If ill persons are not able to go home right away, they should be confined in a separate area away from others.	Persons with influenza should stay at home for at least 5 to 7 days after onset of symptoms.

* People with chronic medical conditions include those who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma (hypertension is not considered a high-risk condition), persons who have required regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]), and persons with any condition (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders) that can compromise respiratory function, the handling of respiratory secretions, or increase the risk for aspiration.